

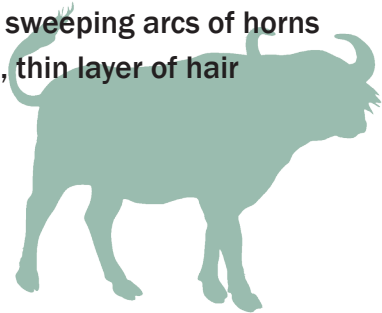
Bison Fact Sheet

Brush up on your bison knowledge

Buffalo vs. Bison

Buffalo

- Two main species found in Africa and Asia
- Huge sweeping arcs of horns
- Short, thin layer of hair



Bison

- Found in North America and Europe
- Small, cow-like horns
- Very thick coat of hair with a pronounced “bear” looping around ribcage
- Faster than buffalo
- Have a large shoulder hump and massive head



What are Beefalo?

- Hybrid of domestic cattle (usually male) with bison (usually female)
- Physically resemble cattle
- Created to combine characteristics of both animals for beef production

Eating

Bison are grazers. They feed in the morning and at night, eating grasses and sedges.

How Do They Eat?

Bison wrap their tongue around a tuft of grass, pinch the grass off between their tongue and lower teeth, and swallow it practically whole.

Horns

- Bison never shed or drop their horns
- Both cows and bulls have horns
- Horns are black & turn grey as bison age
- Horns begin to emerge just prior to second year
- Horns are used as a weapon
- 22-26 inches long
- 2.5 feet apart from tip to tip

Herding Behavior

- Bison can be found alone or in a herd.
- A herd's social structure is always changing.

Reproduction

Bison have a gestation period of nine months and one calf is born in April or May.

Just minutes after they're born, calves stand on the ground and within a few hours they're running.

Calves are born with their eyes open, weigh 25-40 lbs and have a reddish-brown coat that turns brown as they age.

Bison: The Basics

Male

2,000 lbs
5'6" at shoulder

Female

800-1,000 lbs
5' at shoulder

Average life span
15-20 years

Speed

Bison

30-45 mph for
5 miles

Race Horse

40 mph for 1 mile

A bison would outrun a horse with rider.

Standing Vertical Jump

5-6 feet

Visit Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Welcome Center
30239 S. State Route 53
Wilmington, IL
815.423.6370
www.fs.usda.gov/midewin

Visitors are encouraged to stop at the Welcome Center for current information, maps and advisories.